

A doll's house, ghosts and the wild duck essay



**ASSIGN
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According to the Columbia Encyclopedia, realism in literature is an approach that attempts to describe life without idealization or romantic subjectivity.

Realism has been chiefly concerned with the commonplaces of everyday life among the middle and lower classes, where character is a product of social factors and environment is the integral element in the dramatic complications. It is also said that Realist authors opted for depictions of everyday and banal activities and experiences, instead of a romanticized or similarly stylized presentation. One of these writers is Henrik Ibsen.

He's a Norwegian dramatist, whose realistic plays dealing with psychological and social problems won him recognition as the creator of modern drama. Among his famous plays are the *A Doll's House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881) and *The Wild Duck* (1884). *A Doll's House* tells of a woman's rebellion against the confines of a loveless marriage. At the start of the play, sweetness and passion is what can be seen with Nora, the lead character, and Torvald, his husband. Nora lived like a princess. Though Torvald always tells her to learn how to save for the rainy days she still gets money from him, whenever she wishes.

He would call her spendthrift just to tease her with the way she 'melts' money. During the start of the play, her character as "spendthrift" was established and how her husband tolerates her childish act. She was even able to spend on housekeeping and gifts for the Christmas as much as she wants. In short, she experienced life without any trouble. No pain. No tears. No sufferings. This made her think that he loves her so much. But in the end, she was wrong. When the secret about her debt with one of the bank

employees that her husband now manages was opened to air, Torvald said so many insulting things that almost degraded her.

Words that she never thought would come out from the mouth of the man she loved; the same man that protected her every single second; the sameman who gave her not just a good life but a luxurious one; the same man who treated her like a doll living in a doll's house. Ghosts deals with hereditary insanity and the conflict of generations. According to Suzanne Weiss, the title, in Norwegian, actually translates to " something that walks again. " In this case, that something is the " sin" of a dissolute father that returns, long after his death, to cast a shadow on the lives of his wife, his children-both legitimate and not-and his dearest friend.

The fruits of the dark life that the father had were paid by his family, especially his children. When Oswald came home from Paris, he was already sick and dying. His mother took good care of him and gave the attention and caring that he needed. But not long, he discovered the horrible truth that everything his mother told him about his father was a lie to cover up the stinking reality that he is a good-for-nothing man. And because his heart was broken, he tried to find someone who could fill the emptiness he feels inside. Regina gave it to him which made him fell in love with her.

But what was supposed to be a happy dream turned into a nightmare.

Regina was the daughter of Oswald's father with his other woman. Regina became furious when she learned about this. And because of these circumstances, when Oswald was about to die, instead of waiting for his time, he chose to have euthanasia and made his mother do it. He chose to

end his pain and suffering because he knew that he could do nothing to prevent death from approaching and he would still have to die because of his sickness. For him, death was already inevitable and the later it would be, the more would he experience agony and pain.

And so his only escape from all the sufferings that he have is to die. And the last is The Wild Duck. According to Les Gutman, the play is chock full of secrets, some better kept than others, also, not to mention a pack of lies and other assorted manipulations. When Gregers, a son of a famous businessman who had been away without any communications, returned, he found out some unclear issues. This gave him interest to find out the answers behind the questions that had been playing in his mind. So he made effort to investigate and find out the truth.

But instead of clearing everything, he messed up even more and paved way for more unexpected negative scenarios that no one ever imagined. The difference between reality and imagination due to failing eyesight and photography was the highlight of the plot. The issues between Hialmar and Gregers, that were supposed to be already closed, would be opened and they would again start talking back to each other in a manner that they would get so annoyed in the end. All three plays have plots that revolve around one simple thought: secrecy . Each of them played with the shadows of the dark truth that held each character in the story.

At the beginning of each play, they would all have an ordinary day and then the behavior of each character would be established first through their words, their reactions over some issues and some unexpected happenings.

In A Doll's House the first act depicted a normal day at the Helmer's. It was a day before Christmas and Nora was busy keeping the house ready for the night. The first act already established the behavior of each character even on how Torvald despise having debt and how Nora doesn't mind having one. While with Ghosts, the first act depicted the return of Oswald sick and needed caring from someone who knows him.

His mother's lies about his father were also shown and how she painted his reputation with their son. With The Wild Duck, the first act depicted the return of the son of a wealthy merchant. But because of his long absence without any communication, many people do not know that his father even had a son. Also, the small conflict between Gregers and Hialmar was unveiled. They pretended that it was already patched up but everytime that they would encounter each other, their conflict would start once again until they're both pissed off already.

Notice that each play started having an ordinary day with their lives then little by little, the secret will soon be revealed which will later unveil the true identity of each character. The revelation becomes the highlight of the play. It will soon be preceded by how the lives and relationships of the characters would be torn apart. When the issue about Nora having debt was opened to Torvald, he insulted her. She was not able to believe what happened and had some thoughts whether she would still want to stay with him and spend the rest of her life living like a doll; no feelings; no emotions. With Regina, she took the truth hard to accept.

She became furious and was not able to get over the truth. She cannot take the truth that Oswald and her cannot last forever since they are siblings.

Gregers, on the other hand, tried to investigate on himself and find answers to the questions he has on his mind. He tried to unlock doors to some issues that were not clear to him. But his efforts paved way for nothing but more trouble. Instead of solving his problems, he was able to produce chaos that no one ever imagined. The story would fade little by little from the climax till the end when the characters start to find solutions to the problems unveiled.

In the case of these three plays, the lead characters were not able to escape the consequences of the revelation of the secret. They accepted the end that had been waiting for them. In A Doll's House, Nora was not able to stand the insults that her husband threw over her and left her family; her husband and children and became a free woman once and for all. But no one could say if she had done the right choice. Time would still tell us whether she would be a better person that she left her family. In Ghosts, Oswald knew that they could do nothing about their destiny.

For him, no one, not even the most powerful person could change the fact that the woman he loves is his sister. And since he was already sick and dying, he chose to commit euthanasia by persuading his mother to give him antidote. He knew that nothing could change the end. And the more he would spend time here on earth, the more he would feel sufferings and pain. The more time he would have to live, the more he would feel the agony with every breath he has to make. These three plays give us a dosage of reality. In romanticism we get to dream of what we want.

They show us what we can never see or experience in real life. Romanticism gives us hope for a perfect day that we all know we cannot have. Realism awakens us from these dreams and shows us what we should really expect in the end. It shows us the bitter reality that not all of us are able to survive this wicked world without effort. And though some are able to escape the whip of poverty, no one can escape the truth that we are all hindered by our own emotions and feelings. We are contained by our feelings towards other people and towards our situations.